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INFORMATION FROM THE OCTOBER 21 COMMUNITY MEETING (1993)

10/29/1993

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LETTER

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Fernald Environmental Management Project
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OCT 29 1993

DOE-0233-94

Dear Stakeholder:

INFORMATION FROM THE OCTOBER 21 COMMUNITY MEETING

Thank you for attending the DOE RI/FS Community Meeting held at the Plantation on October 21, 1993. Your input was very helpful and greatly appreciated.

As you recall, we held two sessions each of the three small groups on Waste Disposition, Public Participation, and Future Use of the Land at Fernald. I have enclosed the information exactly as it was recorded on the flipcharts from all sessions.

As you can see from the enclosure, many comments/questions/concerns were voiced in the break-out groups. It is our intention to answer your questions, consider your recommendations and address all logical comments to the best of our ability. Of course, this will take time and can't be achieved immediately, but I want to assure you that the Department of Energy has heard your concerns and will respond to them. You will be receiving a follow-up letter as soon as we have assembled our responses to the most crucial concerns.

Thanks to those of you who filled out the evaluation forms or participated in the telephone survey. The overall consensus is that you liked the format and would like to see the break-out sessions at future meetings.

If you have any questions or additional concerns, please call Ken Morgan, Director of Public Information, at 648-3131.

Sincerely,

Raymond J. Hansen
Assistant Manager

Enclosures: As stated

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS
FERNALD COMMUNITY MEETING
OCTOBER 21, 1993

Two public opinion surveys were conducted in association with the October 21, 1993, community meeting on Fernald: a written evaluation that was given to attendees on the night of the meeting, and a telephone survey conducted the following day. There were 33 responses to the written evaluation. Twenty respondents were contacted in the telephone survey.

Comment on the meeting, and the new format in particular, was generally favorable in both surveys. Among phone survey respondents, for example, 95% said they thought the small group discussions should be continued at future meetings. Among those expressing an opinion in the written evaluation, 55% preferred the new format, while 35% said both formats were equally useful and informative. Only 10% preferred the old format.

Asked how they learned about the meeting, about 60% of those answering the written survey reported their information came from word of mouth. Approximately 25% learned of the meeting from flyers. Very few reported being informed by either print or broadcast media, which may throw into question the cost/benefit value of display ads or public service announcements.

About 45% of the respondents in the written survey said they were Fernald area residents. About 23% were Fernald employees. The remainder were scattered among other categories. (It should be noted that respondents could list themselves in more than one category.)

According to both surveys, the waste disposition discussion was the most popular of the three offered. Allowed to attend two of the sessions, about half of the respondents in both surveys said they had attended waste disposition. Future use of land was the second most popular, with public participation third.

In the written survey, respondents were asked to rate how valuable they thought the three sessions were on a seven point scale, with seven being the highest rating. Waste disposition and future land use both scored an average of about 4.7, while public participation averaged 4.4.

It's worth noting that about 56% of those asked in the written survey would have preferred to attend all three sessions. About 26% said they would not prefer to attend all sessions, while the other 18% were undecided. Some respondents in the phone survey suggested the sessions be shortened so everyone could attend all three.

There were some negative opinions expressed about the small group discussions, most of them attributable to expectations about the purpose of the discussions. Many comments were received in both the written and phone surveys that indicated some attendees believed the break-out sessions would be used to answer questions about Fernald, rather than gather public opinions and concerns.

If small group discussions are held at future meetings, as the public appears to prefer, more attention needs to be paid to explaining the purpose of those discussions before they begin. A mechanism also needs to be developed to answer at least some of the questions that arise in the discussions during the evening. Most frustrations expressed by respondents in both surveys centered around a lack of answers to questions.

Exhibits and handouts at the meeting were both viewed positively by the respondents. Of phone survey respondents, 65% said they looked at the exhibits. The quality of information in the exhibits was given an average rating of 5.2 on the seven point scale.

Handouts were picked up by 90% of those responding to the phone survey. Quality of information in the handouts received an average rating of 5.4 on the seven point scale.

The time allotted to USEPA, OEPA and FRESH should be kept in the agenda, according to the respondents. Better than 90% agreed with that format, among those who responded in the phone survey.

Most impressive was the response in the phone survey to the questions of whether it was worth the time to attend the October 21 meeting, and whether the respondents would attend future Fernald community meetings. All 20 respondents said the meeting was worth the time and that they would attend future community meetings. On the seven point scale, the meeting was given an average score of 5.0 overall for being informative.

Of those responding in the phone survey, 73% said they thought DOE holds enough informational meetings on Fernald. Of the other 27%, half thought DOE holds too many meetings and half thought it holds too few.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS
COMMUNITY MEETING
OCTOBER 21, 1993

Future Use Session 1:

- Concerns about the concentrations of radiation that will be left behind.
- Make a requirement that sites can't be used for something that could harm the public.
- Some waste will be left on site.
- If wastes are left behind, it must be under DOE ownership and not moved.
- Water must be included in monitoring.
- Certain areas of the site need to be monitored in future.
- Need a permanent agency to manage site.
- Consider uses that would generate income.
- Potentially a processing facility to take waste from other places.
- Processing might conflict with neighbors' view of land use.
- If we bring more waste in, we may never clean the site up.
- Government -- not a "for profit" business.
- Other communities may not want waste shipped through their communities.
- Use site to generate jobs.
- Recreational land use considerations.
- Waste treatment such as hospital waste.
- Future use must protect groundwater.
- Use must be protective of potential users.
- Cost effectiveness between cleaning groundwater versus point of use.
- Cleanup must be such that contamination is not carried off by those using it (such as animals).
- Clean protects land use.
- Recommendation to use land for a prison.
- Develop numbers for "How clean is clean" with input from experts other than DOE.
- Must consider cost
- Some wastes must be picked up and stored on site or shipped off site.
- Move waste away from aquifer.
- Concerns about who has authority to say where it goes.
- Waste should go to a dry climate.
- Authorities cause problem.
- Stakeholders (farmers, workers, all) should have a voice in making the decisions.
- Get on with it!
- Clean it up -- do something else if you can't clean it.
- Need to clean site in a reasonable time.
- Should focus on land use first.

Future Use Session 2:

- Future land use must consider government, private, or public uses.
- Who is the decision-maker?
- County, local government are potential issues.
- If site is used for storage there must be a buffer between waste and outside.
- Funding support to local entities (grants).
- Preference to local government entities.
- Let's clean it first -- then determine land use.
- Not going to be spotless. Use it as a disposal site.
- Land use that would generate more money for community.
- Major sticking point -- sole source aquifer (state law).
- Public acceptability of waste disposal site.
- Since DOE contaminated aquifer they should clean it up.
- Interim uses (limited technology), interim use -- final as technology becomes available.
- Fence it up/clean it up to a reasonable level.
- Restore to natural state.
- Feasible use -- do not invent a use.
- Must be cleaned to some point.
- Must guarantee that off-site is protected (water and people).
- Don't want fence in back yard.
- Carve it up -- different uses based on cleanup levels.
- Compositing.
- Continued water treatment.
- Advanced Wastewater Treatment System designed for public use after cleanup.
- Cost versus benefit.
- How do we find out what the public is willing to pay for?
- Concerns about what is cost effective.
- Use money that is wasted.
- Ignore cost/ do the job right.
- Technology site - let companies who want to develop remediation equipment lease space and time at Fernald.
- How will it be transported off site? By rail or truck?

Public Participation Session 1:

- Cannot have too many meetings. (Public recommended that DOE/FERMCO keep scheduling meetings to keep the public informed)
- Get the public involved earlier in the process.
- Use more public buildings for meetings (such as Ross High School or the Meadowbrook).
- Keep public informed and updated about the budget at Fernald.

- Better education about history of site for people who are newcomers at meetings.
- Better telephone access to the site.
- DOE/FERMCO have an obligation to support the community.
- Turn around time on investigations and commenting on documents needs to be more prompt.
- DOE/FERMCO needs to have a plan of action for how they deal with critical problems.
- Better communication to employees and to the local community (business owners).
- DOE Newsletter
- Recommendation to put a paragraph in the Cleanup Report that is a section dedicated to "current events" happening at the site (such as the problem with local business owners about the half hour lunch policy).

Public Participation Session 2:

- More group dynamics at the site.
- Use the videos and other communication resources that are produced at the site to show to employees and the community (do not just produce these videos and then not show them to everybody).
- Get people more involved in future land use and health effects issues.
- Some people are more interested in the techniques used for cleanup and the actual cleanup overall versus future land use. "We don not even know how we are going to cleanup the site yet let alone decide what the finished product of the land at the site will be after cleanup is completed."
- Concern about the Emergency Management System and whether or not the public and employees know what to do in the case of an emergency (such as a tornado hitting the site).
- Concerns about DOE's Restructuring Plan and Future Layoffs.
- Better notifications/communication to the employees and the public.

Waste Dispostion/Transporation Session 1:

- More detailed breakdown of where (Fernald) waste has been shipped to is needed for the public.
- If waste is stored on site, then monitoring must continue and the waste must be retrievable.
- Cleanup and disposition of wastes in the pits and silos are a priority.
- Thorium and similar materials should be shipped off site.
- What is the status and purpose of MAWS?
- Will a vitrification facility be built to handle K-65 waste?
- Will employees be trained to work on MAWS?
- Are other sites using vitrification?

- Why use vitrification?
- What are the emissions from vitrification?
- Explain the original classification of the uranium sold to France.
- Need breakdown of waste types.
- What is status of UNH and when will this be resolved (in respect to removal and disposition of UNH)?
- Explain difference between soil decontamination and soil washing.
- Is MAWS the same as soil decontamination and soil washing?
- What is the status of the Rotary Kiln? Will it be started and if so, who will operate it?
- Have we encountered any problems with MAWS?
- What materials will be encased? What types of materials will be used for encapsulation?
- Have there been problems with transportation of waste (particularly thorium)?
- Will Nevada close its borders?
- Explain varying levels of uranium in South Plume test wells.
- Will (Fernald) waste be shaped in different forms (marbles, rods, etc.) through vitrification?
- Are there plans to use the new scrubbers and equipment for MAWS?
- If NTS refuses the waste (from Fernald), then what? What will Fernald do with the waste and to whom will it go?
- Can DOE waste go to a Compact site?
- Must determine how clean is clean?
- How much plutonium is on site?
- Will there be steps taken to eliminate the paperwork (to expedite the cleanup)?
- What are the sources of compact waste?
- Does Fernald generate radioactive medical waste which must be treated as separate waste stream? (If so, does this new waste stream have additional requirements since it comes from a DOE-owned facility?)

Waste Disposition/Transportation Session 2:

- How much waste has been removed from the site? Where was it shipped to?
- How much more waste remains on site?
- Provide breakdown of wastes on site. Categorize the wastes in a one-page summary for the public.
- Is there a waste disposition plan that identifies the different processes?
- Need federal policy on waste disposition.
- Need better dissemination of information to general population (stakeholders). The information should not be generated by DOE only. An independent source is needed. Use National Academy of Sciences (or other reputable, independent sources).
- Provide information on all waste streams. Give good estimates (include quantity) of all waste streams on site and identify the air and water emissions.

- How will public concerns be taken into account when the waste plans are developed?
- How much plutonium is on site? Need immediate answer to plutonium incident in June.
- Need more understandable units of measures -- and be consistent! (Don't use pico curies per liter in one reference and milligrams the next reference. Avoid metric measurements.)
- Why has it taken so long to an answer to the employees affected by the plutonium incident in June?
- What are we considering regarding above-ground monitored, retrievable storage? Provide the results of our evaluation.
- Will we remove the flyash or leave it in place? Is it cost effective to remove flyash (as opposed to other alternatives)?
- Need better explanation of what it takes to move waste off site.
- What wastes will go (off site), and what wastes will stay (on site)? How will the decisions be made?
- If wastes stay (on site), what is the danger and how will it affect future land use?
- Identify technologies for waste treatment and waste minimization.
- Where will glassified waste go?
- Need evaluation of in situ vitrification.
- Need information on groundwater pathways.
- Should more people be included in the water hook-ups?
- What is the long-term stability of technologies and treatment processes?
- People need to be kept informed of treatment processes. Ask people if they want to observe demonstrations of technologies.
- During vitrification, what happens to the toxins? Are they emitted (to the environment)?
- Evaluate contaminate separation and chemical destruction for waste treatment.